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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-07
DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-13 /087 W
----------091112Z 107959 /20
O R 091035Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7695
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL UDORN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0269

BANGKOK ALSO PASS CORCORAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR SREF MOPS PFOR PINS SHUM LA TH
SUBJECT: LAO-THAI BORDER INCIDENT

REF VIENTIANE 0267

1. LPDR FOREIGN MINISTRY CONVENED CHIEFS OF MISSION AT 2:30 P.M. FEBRUARY 9 FOR BRIEFING ON BORDER SHOOTING INCIDENT IN VIENTIANE. SECSTATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS NOUPHAN SITHPASAY PRESIDED AND MOST CHIEFS OF MISSION FROM BOTH COMMUNIST AND NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WERE PRESENT.

2. NOUPHAN SAID CHIEFS OF MISSION WERE CALLED IN FOR BREIFING ON "REGRETTABLE INCIDENT" WHICH TOOK PLACE THIS MORNING WHEN THAI OFFICIALS FIRED "MANY SHOTS FOR MANY HOURS, NUMBER OF LAO DIED AND PROPERTY WAS DAMAGED". NOUPHAN SAID THAT ABOUT 10:00 A.M. TWO "LAW
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VIOLATORS" FLED TO SAND ISLAND IN MEKONG, AND LAO OBRDER GUARDS SHOT TO TRY TO GET THEM TO STOP AND RETURN. AT SAME TIME, HE WENT ON, THREE POLICEMEN WENT ONTO SAND ISLAND WHICH WAS LAO TERRITORY TO CAPTURE THE TWO "LAW VIOLATORS". HE SAID THE THAI THEN SHOT AT THE THREE LAO POLICE WHO WERE KILLED AND THEIR BODIES WERE STILL IN PLACE ON THE SAND ISLAND. LAO OFFICIALS HAD THEN

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TRIED TO RECOVER THE THREE BODIES BUT WERE UNABLE TO
AND THEY REMAINED THERE AT THAT TIME. NOUPHAN
ADDED THAT THE THAI HAD ALSO SHOT AT LAO HOUSES,
DAMAGING THEM.

3. NOUPHAN THEN SAID THAT THIS WAS AN UNFORTUNATE
INCIDENT IN VIOLATION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE AUGUST 1976
LAO-THAI AGREEMENT. HE ADDED THAT IT WAS ONE OF MANY
INCIDENTS WHICH THE NEW THAI MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAD
STARTED. AND, ON BEHALF OF HIS MINISTRY AND GOVERNMENT,
HE PROTESTED ENERGETICALLY AGAINST THIS PROVOCATION.
HE ASKED THE THAI GOVERNMENT TO STOP SUCH INCIDENTS FOR
THE PROTECTION OF THE PEOPLES OF BOTH COUNTRIES.
PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

4. HE THEN INVITED THE ASSEMBLED DIPLOMATS TO VISIT
THE SITE AND SAID THAT THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF NONGKHAI
PROVINCE WOULD BE ARRIVING ON THE THAI BANK AT THE SAME
TIME.

5. THE DIPLOMATS THEN WENT TO THE BANK OF THE MEKONG
ABOUT HALF WAY BETWEEN THE CENTER OF THE CITY AND
WATTAY AIRPORT AND WERE FERRIED ACROSS A SMALL INLET
TO THE SAND ISLAND. THE THAI CHARGE AND A SECOND
SECRETARY, NEITHER OF WHOM HAD BEEN AT THE MINISTRY
BRIEFING, WERE WAITING AT THE RIVER BANK. THE GROUP
PROCEEDED OUT ON THE SAND ISLAND WITH THE TWO THAI
DIPLOMATS IN FRONT. THEY HAILED THE AUTHORITIES ON THE
THAI SIDE AND A PERSON ANNOUNCING HIMSELF TO BE THE
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DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF NONGKAHI PROVINCE RESPONDED. THE
NONGKHAI OFFICIAL SAID THAT LAO DOCTORS COULD GO TO
TAKE CARE OF THE ARMED LAO, TWO OF WHOM WERE DUG INTO
FOXHOLES IN THE SAND. THE DOCTORS THEN WENT UP TO THE
THREE ARMED LAO, FOLLOWED BY THE DIPLOMATS. ONE OF THE
LAO WAS WOUNDED BY A BULLET IN HIS THIGH. ONE WAS NOT
WOUNDED AT ALL, AND THE THIRD WAS DEAD WITH A BULLET
HOLE IN HIS HEAD.

6. THAI CHARGE CHET NAVARAT TOLD SEVERL WESTERN
DIPLOMATS THAT HE HAD TRIED TO GET THE LAO TO STOP THE
SHOOTING IN ORDER FOR THE THAI TO STOP. NOUPHAN
ESTIMATED THAT THE SHOOTING CONTINUED FOR ABOUT TWO
HOURS, UNTIL NOON.

7. COMMENT: THE LAO MOVED QUICKLY TO CONVENE THE
DIPLOMATS, WHOM THEY IN EFFECT USED AS
A CEASE FIRE COMMISSION TO ASSURE THEIR SAFETY WHEN
THEY WENT ON THE ISLAND TO RECOVER THE THREE LAO

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BORDER GUARDS. THE THE SAND ISLAND APPEARS TO BE OBVIOUSLY
IN LAO TERRITORY AS THE LAO CLAIM, SINCE IT IS ON THE
LAO SIDE OF THE DEEP WATER CHANNEL BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES. NOUPHAN'S REMAKRS, HOWEVER, INDICATE THAT
THE LAO STILL ARE TRYING, AT LEAST OVERTLY, TO MAINTAIN
A MODICUM OF FRIENDSHIP WITH THE THAI.
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